

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-4. Canceled.

5. (New) A method for analyzing divalent cations by ion chromatography employing a cation exchange column, comprising eluting the cation exchange column with an eluent comprising an acid and at least one amino acid selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine and arginine.

6. (New) A method for analyzing alkaline earth metal ions by ion chromatography, comprising eluting a cation exchange column with an eluent which comprises an acid and at least one amino acid selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine and arginine.

7. (New) A method for analyzing alkaline earth metal ions by ion chromatography, comprising eluting a cation exchange column with an eluent which comprises an acid selected from the group consisting of nitric acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid, methanesulfonic acid, oxalic acid, tartaric acid, benzoic acid and phthalic acid and at least one amino acid selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine and arginine.

8. (New) A method for analyzing alkaline earth metal ions by ion chromatography, comprising eluting a cation exchange column with an eluent which consists essentially of an acid selected from the group consisting of nitric acid, sulfuric

acid, phosphoric acid, methanesulfonic acid, oxalic acid, tartaric acid, benzoic acid and phthalic acid and at least one amino acid selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine and arginine.